

Ready, willing and able

No erected Big Top today
no sawdusted arenas or rolls of painted canvas
a dark sideshow has found its way
into a womb of Colonial privilege

Star-spangled banners exert unease
Ms Ready emphatically reclaims this sacred space
her legs mirroring the strength of its marble columns
an exotic Koori knockout, she harnesses the spirits
stolen from those caged
in the rusty menagerie over which she towers

These Aboriginal faces reflect historical human zoos
sadly mirrored today in jails countrywide
unnatural spectacles without safety nets
spell-binding juggling acts are needed to sidestep those circuses
as the magicians who manipulate such entertainments continue to shine
ticket prices skyrocket as risks and casualties increase

Mr Ready firmly stands his ground
not just a boxing-tent performer
his fists help him to protect and survive—day in, day out
tattoos share daredevil stories and legacies
scars of resilience
just like tightrope walkers, who demand respect

Knife dodging acts, gun shooting cowboys and bareback riders
fires rage with spectacular damage
evidence of a nation with holes in buckets
which leak more than water
"There's a gaping hole in this bucket, dear Liza,
how on earth can you fix it dear Henry, dear Henry?"

The clowns enter and the show goes on...